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ABSTRACT

For two years, 1986 and 1987, the state of Oregon sponsored a fall-term study abroad program in Beijing, China, for teacher education majors. A 3-year federal grant supported a consortium of Oregon universities, colleges, and community colleges in activities to strengthen Asian-Pacific studies programs in the state. The Oregon Teacher Education Program (OTEP) was designed to provide the opportunity for future teachers to live and study in an Asian country as part of their undergraduate degree programs and to provide an international faculty development opportunity for teacher education faculty. The courses offered as part of the OTEP included beginning Chinese language and Chinese history and culture as well as a foundations course and curriculum development. A faculty member from Oregon accompanied the students to teach the two education courses, to advise students, and to coordinate with Beijing Teachers College. This paper presents an overview of the development and implementation of the program and retrospective comments on the program from students and the resident director. The appendices include a tentative itinerary, a program brochure, and an excerpt from the "China Daily." (JD)

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A FOREIGN PROGRAM FOR U.S. TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS: OREGON'S EXPERIMENT IN CHINA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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A FOREIGN STUDY PROGRAM FOR U.S. TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS: OREGON'S EXPERIMENT IN CHINA

Development of the Oregon Teacher Education Program

For two years, 1986 and 1987, the state of Oregon sponsored a fall-term study abroad program in Beijing, China, for teacher education majors. The genesis of this project was a U.S. Department of Education grant from the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program, Title VI of the Higher Education Act. The grant was submitted by the Oregon International Council (OIC), a non-profit organization whose mission is to develop and maintain cooperation among educators, community members, and business leaders in efforts to strengthen Oregon's international awareness and knowledge. The three-year grant supported a consortium of Oregon universities, colleges, and community colleges in activities to strengthen Asian-Pacific studies programs in the state.

At the initiative of Dr. Jack Van de Water, director of the Oregon State System of Higher Education Foreign Study Programs Office, the study abroad component was included in the grant. Rationale for this came from a Council on Learning survey entitled, "College Students' Knowledge and Beliefs: A Survey of Global Understanding" which reported that education majors were the lowest scorers on the knowledge test.

The Oregon Teacher Education Program (OTEP) was designed to provide the opportunity for future teachers to live and study in an Asian country as part of their undergraduate degree programs

and to provide an international faculty development opportunity for teacher education faculty. Consistent with the Oregon International Council cooperation model, OTEP was a statewide program, linking public and private institutions in planning and participation. Dr. Van de Water and Robert Willner, director of the Oregon International Council, took the leadership in administering the program, working directly with the Oregon Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (OACTE). During the first year of the grant, an OACTE advisory board met several times to establish curriculum and program itinerary, to approve course credits, and to develop screening criteria for students and for the resident director. State system contacts with the Beijing Teachers College (BTC) were renewed and formal program negotiations were concluded with BTC president, Yang Chuanwei. This was facilitated by Dr. Dennis Evans, Oregon State University faculty member teaching at BTC on a Fulbright exchange during 1985-86.

Following the selection of the first group of students and the resident director (during March and April of 1986) an orientation was held in a central location in Oregon. This May meeting allowed students and the resident director to meet each other, as well as receive information about life in China, suggestions for preparation, and a review of course requirements. A handbook which included a bibliography and readings on the topics of Chinese culture, education, and language, and adjustment to a new culture, was distributed and reviewed. Speakers at the orientation included Chinese students, Oregon

students who had recently returned from study in China, and Oregon State System of Higher Education Foreign Study Programs staff members.

The semester-long program offered four courses to students for 5 quarter hours each:

*Chinese History, Culture, and Society

*Cultural and Social Foundations of Education

*Special Methods: Curriculum Development

*Chinese language (beginning level)

A faculty member from Oregon accompanied the students to teach the two education courses, to advise students and to coordinate with Beijing Teachers College. Chinese faculty taught the other two courses and coordinated most field excursions. A two-week December travel/study program concluded at Xiamen University in Fujian province, Oregon's sister province (Appendix A). The cost per student in the 1986 program was approximately $3000, which included airfare, travel within China, field trips, books, lodging, most meals, administrative costs, and tuition at BTC. Home campus tuition was not included.

During the two-year life of the program, grant money provided travel support for the resident director, while faculty salary support came from his/her institution. Publicity and administrative support came from the state system foreign study program staff (see Appendix B). Student recruitment was the responsibility of the OACTE and the schools/colleges of Education. Each OACTE institution designated a representative for a state-wide committee to publicize, screen and nominate a

resident director. During the first year, 12 students accompanied Assistant Professor Nancy Benson of Portland State University. During the second year, 9 students accompanied Professor Zaher Wahab of Lewis and Clark College (Portland, Oregon). To those who worked to establish the program, OTEP seemed an ideal and unique comparative education experience for teacher education majors.

OTEP: From Rationale to Reality

While the Oregon State System of Higher Education had sponsored foreign study programs in Beijing for several years, and, more recently, in Fuzhou, the notion of adding a program which focused on the study of education rather than language, was certainly a novelty. But a program designed expressly for undergraduate education majors, a group seldom participating in overseas study, could be described as a unique experiment. An exlicit goal of the Oregon Teacher Education Program in China was to provide a group of future Oregon teachers with expanded global awareness. This was to be accomplished by using the broad topic of education as a vehicle by which China could be explored. Another goal was to provide experiences and knowledge which could be used by these future teachers in their classrooms, and to guide them toward this end through curriculum planning and the development of teaching resources. An implicit goal of the program was to increase global understanding in the school children of Oregon.

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Establishing the Oregon Teacher Education Program on the

campus of Beijing Teachers College provided many advantages. While there were some difficulties, as one might expect with any new program, college officials and faculty worked hard to arrange the requested field trips, weekend travels, guest speakers, interpretors, etc. The OTEP students were quick to develop friendships with their fellow Chinese education students. This was due, in part, to their being housed next to Chinese students, away from the foreign guesthouse and other foreign students, and to the large number of BTC students who were studying English. These friendships resulted in requests for the OTEP students to speak to Chinese college student groups and classes, as well as nearby public schools, to visit student homes, and to socialize with Chinese teacher education students.

The BTC students were continually amazed that these U.S. students had chosen to enter the teaching field, and were looking forward to becoming teachers. The OTEP participants continually struggled with the reality that most of the BTC students were ashamed of attending a teachers college and had no interest in becoming teachers, having been assigned to the profession by the state authorities. About four weeks after the first OTEP group arrived, the English-language newspaper, China Daily, featured an article on the situation at BTC, outlining the problems in teacher education and the teaching profession in general. This article provided a unique introduction to the study of Chinese education (Appendix C). Field trips to primary and middle schools in Beijing and, later, in Xiamen and conversations with teachers reinforced what the media was reporting regarding the

status of the teaching profession, the salaries, the housing, and the working conditions.

The courses offered as part of the Oregon Teacher Education Program in China included Beginning Chinese Language and Chinese History and Culture, both taught by BTC faculty. At student request, the Chinese language course was largely conversational, enabling most students to learn enough Chinese to use local transportation, purchase items, order food, ask directions, and introduce themselves. The Chinese history course focused on pre-1900 China. The students' favorite travel experience was to Xian, where the history instructor was able to accompany the group on the five day trip to the tomb of Qinshi Huandi, Ban Po village, the Shaanxi Provincial Museum, and the Tang Tombs, as well as some outlying villages. This trip was arranged by the resident director and the college authorities. There were also college-arranged field trips to the Great Wall, the Ming Tombs, the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, various Beijing museums, and to Chengde, site of the summer palace of the Qing emperors.

The two education courses, taught by the resident director, featured guest speakers, field trips, discussions, and assigned readings. (The latter were compiled the summer before departure, along with variety of resource books and materials. These materials accompanied the group to China). For the Cultural and Social Foundations of Education course, the Beijing Teachers College Educational Research Institute furnished several speakers and interpretors who discussed the history of Chinese education, primary and middle school education, technical, correspondence

and television education, university education, and teacher education. The National Minorities Institute field trip and lecture by the deputy director, was a particularly popular topic among the OTEP participants. A number of primary and middle schools were visited, as well as a Children's Palace, a school for the deaf, and a reform school.

The Curriculum Development course offered the Oregon elementary and secondary education students an opportunity to explore their personal interests as they planned teaching units and gathered materials for use with various age levels and subject areas. Course requirements included, as a culminating project, the presentation of a lesson to fellow-students and guests from local schools and teachers colleges. Students presented lessons in Chinese geography, government, art, martial arts, minority peoples, construction materials, music, and childcare. Presentations included slide shows, demonstrations, tape recordings, and participatory lessons, including cooperative learning assignments on the part of the "audience." The Chinese guests were asked to give feedback to the students regarding the content of their lessons.

The final two weeks of the OTEP experience featured travel to Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Xiamen before leaving China for Hong Kong and, then, home to Oregon. During the 8-day stay in Xiamen, the group visited several schools, a kindergarten, a teachers' college, and Jimei Education Center, as well as local sites. The days in Xiamen also left some time for reflection, before the group members went their separate ways.

OTEP in Retrospect: The Student Point of View

Following the return of the two Oregon Teacher Education Program groups (January 1987 and January 1988), students were asked to evaluate their study/travel experiences in China. Results of these evaluations were very positive. In February of 1989 a follow-up survey of both groups was done to determine the impact of the OTEP experience one and two years later. Again, results were overwhelmingly and uniformly positive. Students reported an ongoing interest in China, continued study in Chinese culture, history or language, a desire to return to China, and a feeling that the experience impacted their lives. In addition, students reported a feeling of personal or professional satisfaction from sharing their experiences or knowledge about China.

Asked to describe any teaching experience which has involved China topics, OTEP participants shared the following comments:

"I am now teaching fifth grade and I incorporate my Chinese experience whenever possible."

"My views on life have changed since my return."

"I've used my slides and done a special 'Travel in China' overview...for seventh and eighth graders during my student teaching."

"...Looking for work last spring, I have no doubt that 'Beijing Teachers College' at the top of the Education section of my resume encouraged administrators to take a look at my application."

"For me the China experience hasn't ended. In fact, most of

the reading I do about China has far more meaning now and I continue to gain perspective."

"Seeing and experiencing how other cultures educate their people gives a valuable insight into our own system of education."

"As I gain more teaching experience the value of my time in China becomes more clear."

"I would definitely encourage other prospective teachers to take part in an OTEP program."

Clearly the Oregon Teacher Education Program in China appears to have acheived its goals of increasing global awareness and teaching skills in a group of young teachers.

OTEP in Retrospect: The Resident Director Point of View

Another goal of the Oregon Teacher Education Program in China was to provide an international faculty development opportunity for faculty in schools/colleges of education. Both resident directors have reported positive outcomes as a result of their participation in the program. Nancy Benson was able to conduct research while at Beijing Teachers College which she used in her doctoral dissertation, a study of Chinese secondary teachers' beliefs. While in China she also explored special education programs for handicapped children, as well as special education teacher preparation. She has since presented China-related papers at two national conferences and one international symposium. This summer she will co-teach a Continuing Education China Curriculum course for Portland State University with a

former colleague from Beijing Teachers College.

Since his participation in OTEP, Zaher Wahab has developed a new comparative education course, at Lewis and Clark College, which includes a focus on China. This summer he will return to China as the leader of a tour group.

The Demise of OTEP and Its Future

With such apparent success one might ask why the Oregon Teacher Education Program died after only two years. Initially, a grant provided seed money of $4000 to establish the program, without any requirement for a commitment of funds from the Oregon Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (OACTE) or the institutions. The grant did not evolve from a grassroots effort of key people in the state's teacher education programs; rather, the seed money was granted and then the OACTE was brought into the planning. Perhaps the program would have survived if key people, especially representatives of schools of education, had taken a leadership role in initiating the program. In retrospect, letters of future commitment could have been required as part of the granting of funds and this might have assisted in sustaining a successful program.

More critically, however, OTEP was a victim of Oregon's teacher certification reorganization. Near the end of the grant cycle, Oregon was in the complex process of restructuring teacher certification and abolishing the undergraduate teacher education majors. The OACTE saw little hope for fitting the study abroad program into the new fifth year certification requirements.

Without teacher education majors at the undergraduate level and without any funding base, the program was reluctantly ended. Yet, as student surveys show, the program has had a significant impact on the 21 Oregon students who participated. We remain convinced that those who will teach our young people need and deserve this kind of international experience. As the importance of global competency gains increased national attention, we hope that the leadership among our colleagues in teacher education will create new international programs and that the OTEP experience might serve as a model in that regard.

Appendix A

OREGON TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN CHINA

TENTATIVE ITINERARY

1986

August 28-29 Depart Portland; arrive Beijing; dorm assignments at the Beijing Teachers College.

August 30 Orientation and briefing on China's educational system; introductory tour of Beijing Teachers College; greet Chinese staff.

August 31 City tour of Beijing, including Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City.

September 2 Classes begin

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Mon. - Fri.	8-8:50	Chinese Language
Mon. & Weds.	9-11:00	Cult. Fnds. of Ed.
Mon. & Weds.	2-4:00	Curriculum Dev.
Tue. & Thurs.	9-11:00	Chinese History & Culture

Friday field day visits: schools; day-care centers; factories; rural village; neighborhood committee; youth detention center; museums; Institute of Nationality Studies; Children's Palace

September 13 Ming Tombs and Great Wall

September 20 Summer Palace and Beijing University

September 26-27 CHENGDE (with students from Chinese language program)
Chengde is the site of the summer palace of the Qing emperors. The area is known for its Buddhist and Tibetan temples, indicative of Qing attempts to gain political influence and support in Tibet.

October 1 National Day Celebration in Beijing - Holiday

October 15-17 Midterm exams

November 10 Overnight train to XIAN
Capital of 11 dynasties over 1000 years, XIAN was one of the world's great metropolises, rivaling its contemporaries: Bagdad, Constantinople and Rome. It is noted for the terracotta soldiers found in the tomb of Qin shi Huangdi, the first Chinese emperor. Visit Ban Po, a 6000 year old neolithic village; Huaqing Hot Springs where in 1936 Chian Dai-shek was taken prisoner by his own

troops, who wanted him to fight Japanese instead of Communists; in the heart of the city are the Shaanxi Provincial Museum, one of China's finest, and the Forest of Stelae, a stone repository of classical Chinese learning; also visit the great Mosque, built in 742 A.D., the largest active mosque in central China.

November 15 — Return by train to Beijing

November 17 — Classes resume

November 27 — THANKSGIVING PARTY

December 1-2 — FINAL EXAMS SCHEDULE: Dec. 1 8-10 Chinese Language; 2-4:30 Cult. Fnds. of Ed. Dec. 2 2-4:30 Chinese History

December 3 — FAREWELL PARTY

December 4-5 — Fly to SHANGHAI
China's largest city, Shanghai is also its industrial, cultural, educational, and medical center. The legacy of the colonial past is the architecture of the city center, most typified by the Bund.

December 6 — HANGZHOU
The West Lake is Hangzhou's foremost attraction; its exquisitely landscaped paths and gardens have inspired the Song Dynasty's greatest artists. The city is also famous for its tea brigades, notably Longjing (Dragon Well) and Meijian, and for its silk products.

December 7 — Day trip to SHAOXING

December 8 — Return to SHANGHAI

December 9-16 — Fly to XIAMEN
Special study seminar at XIAMEN UNIVERSITY
Meetings and briefings by representatives of Xiamen University and Fujian Province; discussions with teachers from Xiamen University and visits to elementary and middle schools; visit to Xiamen Special Economic Zone; excursions to Nanputo Temple, Gulangyu Island, and Jimei Educational Center.

Final curriculum project presentations with suggestions from Xiamen teacher education faculty.

Study program reflections and evaluation; discussion on the culture shock of returning home.

December 16 — Overnight ferry to Hong Kong

December 17 — Evening flight home

OREGON STUDENTS PLANNING A CAREER IN EDUCATION NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY FALL SEMESTER IN CHINA.

Study Site. Students will study at the Beijing Teachers College in the People's Republic of China from the end of August to early December. During this time, they will take classes in:

- Chinese History, Culture, and Society
- Cultural and Social Foundations of Education
- Special Methods: Curriculum Development
- Chinese Language (all levels)

A two-week December travel/study program will conclude at Xiamen University in Fujian province, Oregon's sister state. This program will introduce students to the diversity of China's climate, topography, and culture.

Academic Program. Students receive home campus credit for all courses in the program. The four courses offered receive five quarter credits each, for a total of twenty quarter credits for the entire semester. A faculty member from Oregon will be in residence with the students to provide instruction in the education courses, and to advise and counsel students. The Resident Director will work with the Chinese faculty at the Beijing Teachers College to coordinate school visits and to direct a comparative analysis of the Chinese education system. Chinese faculty at the Beijing Teachers College will teach the Chinese Culture/History course and the Chinese language course.

Living Arrangements. Students will live in student dormitories at the Beijing Teachers College and at Xiamen University.

Excursions and Field Trips. The program will include field trips in the Beijing area to schools, factories, and communes as well as to sites of historic interest such as the Forbidden City, the Ming Tombs and the Great Wall, etc. In addition, students will travel extensively in China, visiting Xian and Chengde in the north and the cities of Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Xiamen in the south.

Eligibility. The program is open to students planning a career in education. To be eligible you must:

- be at least a sophomore
- have a minimum GPA of 2.50

No previous Chinese language study is required.

Final selection is based on the application and two interviews on the applicant's home campus. The applicant's academic standing, motivation, and flexibility are factors which will be taken into account during the final selection process.

Costs. Costs for the 1987 Fall program were $3,435. Costs for the 1988 Fall program will be similar. This figure includes round-trip airfare, complete room and board, books, excursions, administrative costs, and field trips. It does not cover home campus tuition, which will be assessed individually by participating institutions. Students attending an OSSHE institution will pay the same amount of tuition as on the home campus for one term. Students from private schools are usually not charged tuition during the Fall semester when they are in China.

Financial Aid. Most forms of financial aid, such as loans and grants for which you are eligible on your home campus, may be applied to the program. Veteran's benefits may also be applied. Contact your campus financial aid office for specific information.

Application Information: The deadline for applying to the program is **March 1, 1988.** Applications forms and more information about the program are available on your campus from

The Dean's Office
School/College of Education
or
The International Programs Office on your campus
or
OSSHE Foreign Study Programs Office
Oregon State University
Admin. Services Room A-100
Corvallis, OR 97331
(503) 754-2394

This program has been reviewed and approved by the Oregon Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.

Appendix B

Teacher shortage is a pressing problem

by Zhang Lin

More people are realizing that China's future lies in educating more talented people. But still few people want to be teachers, even though teachers are the key to developing China's educational system.

An article in China Youth News said that the teachers' colleges in Beijing are facing the difficulties of trying to enrol more talented young middle-school graduates.

According to a survey at Beijing Teachers' College, of the 3,000 applicants for the school this year, only 87 are qualified. Thus the college had to lower its standards.

Even then the college could not fulfil its target of recruiting 800 freshmen.

The Beijing Normal University, founded in 1902, is the oldest of its kind in China and enjoys a good reputation. But its very name keeps students away. While it planned to enroll 182 undergraduates in Beijing this year, only 97 who wished to enter the university were qualified.

Many people, especially youngsters, look down upon the idea of being teachers as teachers in China usually have a lower social and economic status than people in other trades.

As a result, few talented students would like to enter teachers' universities.

The article in China Youth News reported that of 847 students who received high grades in this year's college entrance examination, only one wanted to study at a teachers' college.

Many middle-school students also look down on the idea of being a teacher, a report in Liberation Daily said.

An undergraduate at the Law Department of Beijing Teachers' College said: "My family and I had no hope of my passing entrance exams. That is why I chose teachers' college. But I do not want to be a teacher."

Many educational experts concerned about the situation have called upon society to pay attention to the problem, which is causing a shortage of qualified teachers in primary and middle schools nationwide.

The newly passed law on compulsory education required that every school-age child in China receive at least nine years of schooling by the end of this century. So the shortage of teachers is felt almost everywhere and will grow more serious in the near future.

Estimates suggest that China needs to find 1 million teachers for primary schools, 750,000 for junior middle schools and 300,000 for senior middle schools during the Seventh Five-Year Plan (1986-90) to build up the strength of basic education.

Experts point out that it will be impossible to promote basic education and implement the law on compulsory education unless China has enough qualified teachers.

Poor image

The country's present teaching staff of about 10 million carries a heavy workload. Many of them, especially primary and middle-school teachers, have to face real hardships every day, such as housing shortages, low pay, and limited time for leisure and self-improvement. They also have a poor image compared to doctors, prosperous traders, editors and writers, who also earn more.

Most teachers in China are trained in normal schools or teachers' colleges.

But as Vice-Premier Li Peng said at a national meeting to commend advanced teachers and units on Teachers' Day, bureaucracy, inefficiency and overcentralization of power still plague these schools.

According to He Dongchang, Vice Minister of the State Education Commission, current problems include some normal schools arbitrarily elevating themselves to the status of higher institutes and some teachers' colleges being improperly run.

He said that the work of some teachers' colleges leaves much to be desired.

Some basic subjects such as education and educational psychology are not given sufficient emphasis. As a result, students do not know much about teaching, and they have a fear of teaching middle-school students.

When taking college entrance examinations, many students didn't list any teachers' colleges as their choices, but they were enrolled into these schools against their will, he said. This is the fault of the authorities, who took only examination grades into consideration when enrolling students, he said.

He said that political and ideological work remains to be done in teachers' colleges. Many of those who refused to work as middle-school teachers showed their unwillingness to remain at school, but they were not given guidance until it was too late.

To counter these problems, a Beijing Daily article listed several suggestions:

Society should concern itself with and support the teachers in their work and in their ordinary lives.

The government and society should reward advanced teachers and all those engaged in educational undertakings.

Political and ideological work should be strengthened in teachers' colleges. Teachers' colleges should choose students who want to devote themselves to education, and the curriculum should be arranged in accordance with the special characteristics of a normal school education.

The article also proposed ways to recruit more trainees. Apart from teachers' colleges, other institutes of higher education should also run two-year teacher training courses. Students of television universities may be selected to study for teaching posts in primary and middle schools. Qualified self-taught students may also be assigned to posts at junior middle schools.

The article encouraged local authorities to provide more incentives to boost enrolment at teacher training schools, and suggested that tenure of service for teacher training school graduates who are assigned jobs in remote and border regions be fixed. At the end of their tenure, the article suggested, they might return to their original workplaces.

China Daily, September 25, 1986, p.4